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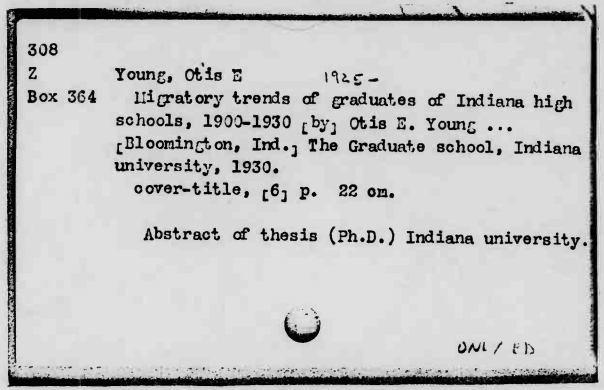

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MIGRATORY TRENDS OF GRADUATES OF INDIANA HIGH SCHOOLS 1900-1930

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THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
INDIANA UNIVERSITY
1930

WSe Mar. 16, 1932

MIGRATORY TRENDS OF GRADUATES OF INDIANA HIGH SCHOOLS. 1900-1930*

This study is based upon 2600 graduates of Indiana high schools, selected from thirty-six high schools scattered throughout the state. The high schools were located in communities which differed widely in population—from cities of more than 100,000 population to townships in which there were no towns. Since it was impossible in this study to adequately study the records of all the graduates of these schools over a thirty year period, a sampling was secured by using every fifth class. No attempt was made to study the record of those who had not graduated at least seven years before the survey was conducted, since experience had shown that these later graduates had not yet had time to migrate in as large numbers as had the earlier classes.

The purpose of the study was to determine how much benefit accrues to the local school district from the maintenance of a high school, as determined by how well the local community is able to hold the graduates of its high school when they have reached the age at which they may be expected to be economic assets to whatever community may be adopted as their place of residence.

High-school graduates were selected for the study because they were assumed to have reached the goal contemplated by those who have labored so long and so earnestly to establish free public education. They therefore represent the finished product and should return to the community which has paid the cost of their training a rich reward for the sacrifices made to educate them. Since such an overwhelming part of the educational costs are borne by the local school district it might well be assumed that the benefits of the education so paid for, should accrue to the same district. Should it so happen that some districts are educating people who will never enrich the social or economic life of the community, then there is being placed upon these districts a financial burden that they can ill-afford to bear, and instead of education's enriching them it is actually draining them of their potential leadership. Under such conditions, the support, by many communities, of excellent schools, often at a heavy sacrifice, is to insure that the community ultimately will be poorer in natural leadership, since the ambitious youths they educate will not long remain in the community but will seek outlet for their talent in other places.

***This is an abstract of a Doctor's dissertation presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy with a major in education in the Graduate School of Indiana University.**

Power to hold high-school graduates is related to size of community. There is a difference of approximately 36 per cent in the holding power of unincorporated places at the lower end of the population scale to cities of 100,000 or more at the upper end of the range. Holding power does not however increase by steady ascent as population becomes greater. Places whose population is 1000-5000 show less holding power than places of fewer numbers. It is not until places have a population of 50,000 that they are able to hold 50 per cent of their graduates, seven years or more after graduation has taken place.

This migration of high-school graduates is not temporary. Once migration has taken place there is little chance that many will ever return. Of all the graduates studied who were at the time of the survey residing in the same locality from which high-school graduation took place, it was found that only 4.11 per cent had ever moved away as much as six months and then returned, unless such removal had been for purposes of securing further education or for visiting. The graduates of the class of 1903 which was the first graduating class of the sampling showed the smallest number of returned persons—slightly more than 1 per cent—indicating that when returns are made they are not likely to be permanent.

Of all the graduates studied it was found that slightly more than 39 per cent were living in the home community. The others had migrated elsewhere. When the boundaries of the locality are widened to embrace the county in which the high school of graduation is located, holding power is increased. Counties show greater tendency to attract graduates than do the smaller units. Counties show holding power of more than 45 per cent, or a 6 per cent increase over the district.

Time is a very potent factor in migration. The earliest class studied showed 17 per cent less holding power than the latest class, with holding power increasing gradually in the later years of the study.

As would be expected there is a well-defined relationship existing between general growth and decline in population and the number of high-school graduates who are likely to remain in a community. The 36 schools from which the graduates upon whom the study is based were drawn, were divided into two groups; one consisting of those districts which had a larger population according to the last United States census than they had in 1900, and those which had fewer people than they had in 1900. It was found that the growing districts had holding power of approximately 44 per cent as compared to holding power of slightly more than 26 per cent for communities that had a declining population. Even greater variation was found when counties were considered as the unit of population rather than school district. Growing counties showed holding power of 55 per cent as contrasted with 32 per cent for declining counties. This difference in holding power of growing and declining counties is significant. The declining counties are those having no large cities within their limits. It is in these declining counties that there is generally found the highest tax-rate for school purposes and too frequently the greatest difficulty experienced in raising enough money to carry on high-school programs that will meet the standards set up by the State. Counties have sufficiently greater holding power than school districts to warrant the county being used as the unit of taxation for school purposes. In the light of the fact that counties have slight holding power unless they are increasing in population it would seem that it would be wise to extend the unit of taxation to include the State as a whole.

A significant factor in the study of migratory tendencies is the distance to which the graduates have migrated. A rather large number, slightly over 22 per cent, of all the known migrants, remain within 25 miles of the place from which they received their high-school training. Less than 10 per cent of the migrants moved more than 25 but less than 50 miles from home. Slightly greater numbers moved more than 50 miles but less than 100 miles from home.

The most popular distance for migration is from 100 to 500 miles. Surprising as it may seem a greater number of graduates preferred to go farther than 100 miles than chose to stay within 25 miles from home; nearly 25 per cent traveling the greater distance. This is not so unusual after all; when a sliding radius is drawn from any point in Indiana at a length of 100 to 500 miles it would, if made to complete a circle, include a vast number of the largest and most rapidly growing cities in the United States and it is to these places that the high-school graduates betake themselves.

There is a great drawing power in places distant more than 500 miles as 17 per cent of the cases studied migrated that far.

When we speak of educating for the life of the community, it becomes a matter of dispute as to just what constitutes a community in this day of rapid transportation. When people are more likely to go distances greater than 100 miles than they are to go 25 miles it is time that consideration be given to the question of just what type of life the local school shall prepare for. It is clearly shown by the sampling used in this study that one cannot expect the graduates of the high schools of Indiana to remain localized. Of those who leave, more than 40 per cent have gone more than 100 miles from home.

Unincorporated places showed the greatest tendency to keep their graduates relatively close at home while places of more than 2500 population show much the greater tendency to send graduates more than 100 miles from home.

It is a matter of common knowledge that there has been a constant shift of population shown on every decennial census from rural to urban centers. It would stand to reason that high-school graduates should participate more or less freely in this movement. It was a problem of this study to determine what relationship the migration of high-school graduates to larger population centers bears to the general migration.

One serious objection that has been offered to any statements about migration of high-school graduates and the deleterious effects it will have on the community losing them, is that there will be a compensating gain made by the ingress

of graduates of other high schools. Small communities do not receive in the exchange of graduates, a number approaching what they lose. It is not until a high schools equal to the number it loses by migration. On the other hand when community has passed the 10,000 mark in population that it can expect to receive a number of graduates from other communities pass the 25,000 mark they can expect to gain on exchange, for more graduates will come to them from other centers than they in turn will lose.

In every place below 10.000 where the number of migrants furnished to the study exceeded 100 there was a pronounced tendency on the part of the graduates to go to places of larger size. It is clearly shown by this study that there is no pronounced tendency to migrate from one community to another of similar type. The trend is unmistakably toward the cities, and of the cities the largest ones are the greatest beneficiaries. It is clearly demonstrated that once a small community begins to lose its high-school graduates, it need not console itself with the thought that there will come a compensating return from other high schools.

There is of course a chance that the graduates of any population group will move to a center smaller than the one from which they graduated. This would be expected by the law of chance. It is not presumed by this study that every graduate leaving a particular community will immediately, or ever, make his way to a place of greater population. There is a drift to smaller communities as well as larger and there is a tendency for graduates to migrate to places of the same type as the one from which they originally came.

Shifting in residence is not aimless wandering, nor does migration take place to points where opportunities are about the same as at home. Migration has underlying causes and does not result from mere whim. Not until cities of more than 100,000 population are found in the study is there any tendency for migration to smaller places to reach the figure shown by larger places of attraction. It may be safely said that when one graduates from high school in a city of 100,000 he is quite likely to find all of the attractions of life at home, and if these attractions are not to be found at home, he is as likely to find them in a community smaller than the one he is now in as he is to find them in a larger. For the smaller communities the trend is ever toward larger centers.

Gillette and Davies calculate the urban increase due to rural migration at 29.8 per cent. If we accept the United States census division between rural and urban at 2500 population then the loss of high-school graduates to urban centers over the period of years covered by this study is approximately 64 per cent or more than double the rate of gain found by Gillette and Davies for general migration.

It has been shown that high-school graduates migrate more freely than population in general and that urban centers gain more high-school graduates than general types. It follows then that rural regions are losing more high-school graduates than other types. This being true there are reasons to believe that in time this migration is bound to create a dangerous situation unless intelligence is a created thing. If intelligence is hereditary then the rural regions are facing an acute situation at some future date. Migration has a decided effect upon the characteristics of peoples when this migration is selective is nature. Even if mentality is not suffering in the rural areas, there is that loss which comes from the constant draining off of people who are alert and aggressive. These are the people who tend to adopt new ideas and to adapt themselves readily to changes. There is consequently being left in the rural regions a more conservative and less adaptive group.

Since large cities are profiting from the migration of these high-school graduates from small communities it seems no more than fair that they should contribute in some manner to the financing of education in small communities. Where the migration stays within state lines this financial policy could easily be handled by means of a state-wide tax for school purposes. There is no logical argument that can be offered against this, if we consider the costs of education in the light of the benefits conferred. A roll-call of the successful and honored citizens of any large city would probably reveal a startlingly large number who have received their schooling at the expense of some financially weak and socially declining village to which they have made no return, except for an occasional visit.

High-school graduates migrate freely beyond the borders of the State. Of those in the study, who were known to have migrated, 40.48 per cent had moved beyond the boundaries of Indiana. There are about four chances in ten that if migration takes place, it will carry the migrant beyond the limits of his state. Of all the graduates represented in the study almost 25 per cent had migrated to points outside the State. There is about one chance in four that any student graduating from an Indiana high school will eventually take up his residence in some other State. Fifty per cent of this inter-state migration is to cities whose population is in excess of 100,000.

In the light of the large numbers of high-school graduates who become a part of inter-state migration—40 per cent of all migrants and 25 per cent of all high-school graduates—it would seem that the Federal Government should assume some responsibility for bearing the expense involved in educating these people. If high-school graduates are such a mobile body and regard State lines so lightly, it would be a matter of good policy to establish such a system of high schools as would insure to any State the ingress of as well educated people as it is losing by migration. High-school graduates have come to regard the nation at large as their community. Some adjustment is necessary if the costs of education are to be distributed according to the places where the benefits accrue.

Of all those persons represented in the study, 42.3 per cent went on to college. This does not include those entering business schools that do not require high-school graduation as an admission requirement.

Time has not made a noticeable difference in the per cent of high-school graduates entering college. It is probable

that had the sample been perfect there would have been no difference. Colleges have increased in enrollment only as high schools have increased in number and enrollment.

Of those who entered college less than half stayed to graduate. The local community is able to hold more of its high-school graduates who have not completed their college courses than of those who graduated from college or of those who did not attend college at all. It is, perhaps, astonishing to find that the people who went to college and failed to find there sufficient attraction to warrant their completion of the four-year course, show a distinct inclination to return to the community of origin, and to be content to remain there. This college sojourn tends to make these people less migratory than they would have been had they not gone.

So great is the difference in holding power between college graduates and those who merely attend college that it develops into a vital problem in migration. A community has less to fear in the way of losing its high-school graduates, if they go on to college. but do not graduate, than it has to fear if they do not go on to college. It cannot be said that higher education, when by higher education is meant merely college attendance, is the cause of the draining away of the high-school graduates of small communities.

With referenece to the college graduates it is clear that they are either by virtue of their previous natures, or by their training, led to migrate more freely than those who did not complete their college courses. The college graduates are nearly 10 per cent more migratory than those persons who took no further training above the high school.

Much of the migration that leaves the bounds of the State consists of persons who have taken degrees from college. Since it has been shown that the interstate migration is an urban migration, it then becomes a corollary that the migration of college graduates is an urban migration. This is essentially true. If college graduates represent a superior group of people, the State is losing heavily of its best human material.

Throughout the entire study there is a decided tendency on the part of high-school graduates to attend a college that is located at a convenient distance from home. So noticeable is this fact that there arises a serious question as to whether or not the selection of a college does not influence the choice of a career rather than that the choice of a career influences the selection of a college.

The females whose records were used in the study showed migratory tendencies to the extent of 63.34 per cent as compared with 56.38 per cent for the males. The migratory tendencies of the sexes vary with the types of communities represented. Males of large cities are more migratory than females.

It is worthy of mention that among these high-school graduates whose records were studied were none who were serving sentences in prison or jails; none were inmates of institutions for the insane. Only one was engaged in a questionable occupation.

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